

Saturday, December 1, 1984 Honolulu Star-Bulletin A-3

Rewald Case Is Attracting Cast of Eerie Characters

By Charles Memminger
Star-Bulletin Writer

The Ronald Rewald case has attracted some of the more off-beat members of society.

While walking into a court one day, surrounded by his attorneys and news reporters, a man walked up to Rewald, who is accused of defrauding investors of some \$22 million, and asked him to "take care of" some secret matter in Latin America.

Anonymous callers have offered news reporters tips on bizarre conspiracies that supposedly involved Rewald — tips that always turned out to be based on fantasy.

One person who has caused quite a stir around Rewald is Scott Barnes.

It was Barnes who told ABC News, the British Broadcasting Corp. and any other news organization that would listen that he was hired by the CIA to kill Rewald. The BBC mentioned in a documentary it made that there had been a plot to kill Rewald but did not mention Barnes by name.

ABC News broadcast Barnes' claims, even though he could not substantiate them. It also showed Barnes on camera talking to a reporter.

BUT AFTER the CIA challenged the accuracy of Barnes' claim and filed a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission, ABC retracted the as-

sination claim.

ABC had used Barnes' statement even though it was aware of Barnes' background and his propensity to involve himself in incidents that just happen to be getting wide media attention.

Barnes surfaced in the much-publicized California trial of the leaders of the Hell's Angels motorcycle gang. He surfaced again in 1981 claiming to have been part of Ret. Col. James "Bo" Gritz' attempt to locate American POWs in Laos.

So it should not have been too much of a surprise that Barnes appeared in Hawaii just about the time the Rewald story was making headlines on the Mainland. Barnes got a job as a guard at the Oahu Community Correctional Center while Rewald was being held there in lieu of \$10 million bail.

Barnes has since signed a sworn affidavit saying that he had been put in the prison by the CIA to kill Rewald, according to San Francisco attorney Melvin Belli. Belli on two occasions agreed to give the Star-Bulletin a copy of the affidavit but has yet to do it.

BARNES' CIA assassination story seemed to unravel as soon as local reporters got wind of it. To begin with, had Barnes actually been assigned to kill Rewald, it is unlikely that he would make his presence at the prison publicly known.

But Barnes had been working in the prison for only a few weeks before he contacted local

reporters with information about what he described as poor prison conditions.

Barnes' charges of prison-guard corruption and poor prison conditions came at a time when federal authorities were pressing the state for access to the prison to conduct an investigation.

Aware that Barnes was complaining to media about prison conditions, the state attorney general's office subpoenaed him to give a sworn statement. Barnes disappeared from the Islands shortly after that.

Although the attorney general's office has not sought Barnes' arrest on the Mainland, the subpoena still is outstanding should Barnes return to the state, according to Attorney General Michael Lilly.

Barnes later surfaced in San Francisco, making contact with Belli, who filed a multimillion-dollar suit against the CIA on behalf of Rewald and a number of investors. Belli says Barnes gave a sworn statement that he was hired by the CIA to kill Rewald.

JACK ANDERSON, who has written extensively about the Rewald case, was aware of Barnes' claims but has not reported it. One of Anderson's investigators said they had run into Barnes on other stories and viewed any of his claims with skepticism.

The Star-Bulletin, although it has not yet interviewed Barnes,

was made aware of his CIA claim through Rewald's attorneys, including Belli, who also apparently had been telling other news organizations about it.

Not surprisingly, Belli's firm helped Rewald get together with Ronald Kauffman, the man who later bought exclusive rights to Rewald's "life story."

If Rewald's claims that the CIA set up and ran his investment company turn out to be false, Rewald's "life story" will just be a tale about about an investment scam. That would not be as marketable as an intriguing story involving the CIA and a plot to murder Rewald.

Although the U.S. attorney's office will not comment on whether it is interested in Barnes as part of the Rewald investigation, the Star-Bulletin has learned that federal investigators from Hawaii have been gathering extensive background on Barnes.

That has included sending an attorney to California to collect information on Barnes from California law enforcement agencies.

If Barnes did sign an affidavit claiming to have been hired by the CIA to kill Rewald, Belli claims, Barnes could face perjury charges should the affidavit be used in connection with any court proceedings.

In any case, both state and federal officials are anxious to talk to Barnes should he return to Hawaii.